

SITUATION REPORT NO. 3
INCIDENT NO. 2001- 005
DATE: March 27, 2001 TIME: 3:00 p.m.

TO: Governor John Hoeven
State Capitol
Bismarck, N.D. 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Spring Flood Potential -- Above normal fall precipitation and a high soil moisture content, compounded by eight years of prior flooding, have resulted in a strong probability for Devils Lake to continue its historic rise. Forecasters expect the Red River of the North to rise several feet above flood stage at gauging locations. Additionally, hydrologists for the National Weather Service (NWS) expect moderate to major spring flooding to occur in the Souris River Basin, and along the Pembina River.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: No deaths or injuries have been reported.
3. DAMAGES: Cooler than normal temperatures have slowed snowmelt in the Red River of the North Basin, according to the Grand Forks Office of the National Weather Service (NWS). In the southern portion of the basin, the river on March 27 measured 8.29 feet at Wahpeton, where flood stage is 10 feet. The latest flood outlook places the 50 percent predicted crest level at 17.5 feet in Wahpeton. In Fargo, the river measured 15.79 feet. Flood stage is 17 feet, and the 50 percent predicted crest level is 34 feet. River stages may fluctuate up to three feet because of ice affecting river channels.

A flood warning remains in effect for the Lower Souris River Basin as moderate flooding takes place near the Towner area. The river at Towner measured 54.7 feet on March 27; flood stage is 52 feet. At Foxholm, the river measured 11.5 feet; the river had crested at 14 feet. Flood stage is 10 feet. A flood statement, issued by the Bismarck office of the NWS, indicates that cooler temperatures continue to slow snowmelt in the basin; additional crest dates have been delayed, as a result.

The Pipestem Creek near Pingree remains above flood stage after cresting at 10.6 feet on March 26. The level on March 27 was 10 feet, one foot above flood stage. At this time, only rural farm cropland is affected by the high water levels, according to the NWS.

Water levels on the James River have been erratic due to ice action. Cooler temperatures have halted runoff and have slowed river movement. All gauging

sites are below flood stage. The river is expected to reach or exceed flood stage at only one location, Ludden, by early April.

Spring runoff in some creeks in Foster County has caused flooding on county and township roads. Road crews have blocked flooded roads.

In neighboring Wells County, normal to slightly higher than average runoff is occurring. Low water crossings with small culverts or small bridges lack the capacity to handle runoff, resulting in overland and river flooding. Rising James

River waters are washing out township roads near the Rocky Run area south of Fessenden. Road crews have barricaded flooded sections of roadways.

In Barnes County, floodwaters threatened a Valley City home until crews partially cleared ice from a nearby bridge and rerouted water. Water also had begun flowing over County Road 21 until workers cleared a box culvert, thereby averting a major road closure. They also scraped ice off the roadway.

The flood warning for Apple Creek was canceled after the creek crested at 14.96 feet on March 22, slightly below its 15-foot flood stage. Caution is advised until water levels recede to bank level and ice clears the system.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: No change from previous reports.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: The St. Paul District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) has approved Governor John Hoeven's request for construction activities and other protective actions to assist the city of Wahpeton in its flood preparedness efforts. Contractors have begun clearing snow and ripping frost for levee alignments. Workers were scheduled to start hauling material on March 27 for levee construction.

During this past weekend, the North Dakota National Guard personnel transported a sandbagging machine, provided by the Omaha District of the COE, from the Bismarck Armory to the Wahpeton Armory.

COE flood area engineers continue to provide technical assistance to communities along the Red River, including the city of Pembina. Engineers plan to conduct an inspection of the city's dike system.

The North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extensive Service issued a news release urging people to store pesticides securely and safely from high water. The news release noted that improperly stored pesticides pose significant hazards to humans and could cause harm to the environment to include surface and ground water contamination.

Staff from the State Water Commission met with Pembina County officials on March 26 to discuss flows and breakout flows along the Pembina River.

In Pembina County, the emergency manager conducted a flood preparedness meeting on March 22 with the county sheriff, a water board member, public works and emergency management staffs and township officials representing the northern tier townships. Flood preparedness reports have been completed by the cities of Pembina, Drayton and Neche.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: With the exception of ongoing technical assistance, no additional requests have been received.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No additional resources are on scene at this time.
9. OTHER: Situation Reports published by North Dakota Emergency Management are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

Douglas C. Friez, State Director